(c) and (d) With the increase in traffic carried by the Railways, the utilisation of Railways' physical assets including track and rolling stock has improved considerably over the last few decades. Replacement and renewal as well as acquisition/construction of additional track and rolling stock is a need based exercise taking into account the age and condition of the assets, traffic requirements and the availability of resources.

Statement

The growth in passenger kilometres, Net tonne kilometres, Route kilometres and Running Track kilometres during the last five years is given below:

Item	1993-94	1998-99	Increase
Passenger Kms. (In millions)	296,245	403,884	36.33%
Net Tonne Kms. (In millions)	257,130	284,270	10.55%
Route Kms.	62,462	62,809	0.56%
Running Tracks Km.	79,188	81,512	2.93%

Speed of Trains

1071. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any plans to increase the speed of trains;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what are the plans with regard to Konkan Railway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Efforts in the direction of increasing the speeds of trains and reducing the speed difference between the fastest & the slowest trains on Indian Railways is a continuous process. The following are some of the efforts being made in this direction:—

(i) Introduction of high speed locos, coaches and wagons.

(ii) Introduction of Air Brake Stock.

(iii) Improvements in the Signalling system like Double Distant Signalling & Auxiliary Warning System (AWS).

(iv) Upgradation of tracks, high speed turnouts, increased reliability of equipment, and increase in line capacity.

(c) All trains of Konkan Railway are time tabled on the basis of a maximum speed of 100 kmph. At present there is no proposal to raise the speed of trains on Konkan Railway.

Overstaffing in Railways

1072. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether overstaffing in the Railways is costing it dear; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to review the situation and reduce the staff strength?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Increasing staff costs as a percentage of earnings is becoming a matter of concern for Indian Railways, more so after implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission. Containing manpower costs therefore not only constitutes an important challenge but also a strategic decision to ensure financial viability of the organisation.

However, even before the impact of the Vth Pay Commission could be felt, the Railways had embarked on a plan of action of regulating their Manpower both in terms of numbers and skill so as to be able to build/maintain and operate the system in the most productive manner possible.

To this end, current measures include regulating manpower at all levels and comparing staff productivity through Internal Benchmarking exercises.

Stoppage of supply of High Tensile Steel Wire to sleeper manufacturer

1073. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Railways lost twenty four crores of rupees per annum as a result of the decision of the Railway Board in April 1992 for stoppage of High Tensile Steel Wire to the sleeper manufacturer;